

# Win, Learn, Focus, Adapt, Win Again

The scrimmage should be as hard as the game.

General Martin E. Dempsey  
Commanding General,  
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## Preface

Our Army throughout its 236 years has always been an Army in transition or transformation—changes brought about by external factors or changes introduced by its leaders to adapt to evolving situations or changes made in anticipation of future requirements.

In 1994—well into my service as the 32nd Army Chief of Staff—we were grappling with change for the future, particularly in the doctrine and training areas of the Army. As we viewed the future through our collective lens, I spoke to senior leaders about being agile and adaptable, stating that “no institution can transform itself coherently and successfully without a clear eye on what it wants to become.”

By then we had been on this journey—begun by my predecessor as Chief, General Carl E. Vuono—for three years, examining both intellectual and doctrinal underpinnings of our Army as it emerged from the Cold War era and such exogenous events as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

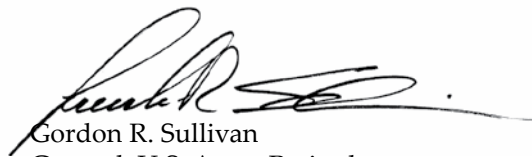
Our focus in 1994 was on ushering our Army into the 21st century. We were then engaged in revising and rescoping our base field manuals: FMs 100-1 (*The Profession of Arms*), 100-5 (*Operations*) and 100-17 (*Mobilization, Deployment, Redeployment, Demobilization*), Joint Chiefs of Staff Publications 1 (*Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*) and 3.0 (*Joint Operations*) and others. At that time, we also introduced Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-5, *Force XXI Operations*. This seminal document was the beginning of our doctrinal vision for our future Army. Its purpose was to cause us to think hard about how Army operations would change in the coming years. Part of our focus was to address the changing dynamics brought on by emerging information technology and its portending impacts on command, control and maneuver.

Today our Army leaders are faced with a parallel set of circumstances. And today, almost a decade of war has had and will have a greater impact across the paradigm we know as DOTLMS (Doctrine, Organization, Training, Leader Development, Materiel and Soldiers). Just as in the 1990s TRADOC envisioned a path for change with its publication of TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5, in December 2009 it published TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3, *The Army Capstone Concept*. The intent of 525-3 is to focus on the future (2016–2028) and the need for operational adaptability under conditions of uncertainty and complexity in a protracted era of persistent conflict.

General George W. Casey, Jr., when he became our 36th Chief in 2007, began a personal dialog with his Architect of the Army’s Future, his TRADOC commander, General Martin E. Dempsey. This dialog, which also included other senior Army leaders, has been focused on charting the Army’s direction when, after years of combat, it again transitions as a trained and ready force into another uncertain future such as we faced after the Gulf War.

This compilation of writings by General Dempsey—six articles published in *ARMY* magazine from October 2010 to March 2011, plus the speech he delivered at AUSA’s 2011 Winter Symposium in February—captures the mutual focus of the Chief and his TRADOC commander on what our Army must do to shape itself for the future. There is recognition that our Army is always a force in transition, that it will expand and contract, train and deploy, and perpetually modify its Tables of Organization and Equipment. But the primary imperative for our leaders must be to care for the Soldiers and families who have endured so much for the country they love.

That said, the Army and its leadership must win, learn, focus, adapt and win again—win the conflicts they face, learn better and faster than their enemies, focus on the fundamentals, adapt as an institutional imperative and, when called upon, win again.



Gordon R. Sullivan  
General, U.S. Army Retired  
President, Association of the United States Army

10 March 2011





# Driving Change Through a Campaign of Learning

**By GEN Martin E. Dempsey**  
Commanding General,  
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Command

**W**e continue to learn important lessons from our ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Every once in a while, however, an incident outside the Army can help us understand the challenges we will con-

tinue to face in the future. In that spirit, I'll briefly use the recent oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico to illustrate how we're working in U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) to prepare for the future.

The once unimaginable scenes of oil streaming from the broken well at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico are still real to us. For months, the powerful images of the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon platform and the oil-covered wildlife were part of our everyday life. It will likely take many years to calculate the full costs of this tragedy. One marine science professor



Dennis Steele/ARMY Magazine

*Soldiers from the Noncommissioned Officer Academy at Fort Rucker, Ala., participate in a Leadership Reaction Course obstacle course, which tests NCOs' leadership abilities, teamwork and communication skills.*

noted, "It could take years, possibly decades, for the system to recover from an infusion of this quantity of oil and gas. ... We've never seen anything like this before. ... It's impossible to fathom the impact." Yet these seemingly unimaginable events do occur, whether they're generated by Mother Nature or human nature. In TRADOC, we are working to avoid a "failure of imagination."

Of course, we have always lived with uncertainty and the specter of the unimaginable. We believe, however, the character of uncertainty is fundamentally different today. Today's uncertainty is the result of persistent conflict with hybrid threats, enabled by technology, that decentralize, network and syndicate. We live in a far more competitive security environment than we did just 10 years ago. In such an environment, we should expect to be surprised more frequently and with potentially greater impact. Our profession, therefore, demands leaders with greater imagination and increased awareness of the "weak signals" of impending change. We see it as our responsibility to think differently about institutional adaptation—shifting from a reactive to a proactive stance to recognize and influence change before "strong signals" force us to adapt on others' terms.

### A Campaign of Learning

Here at TRADOC we are reaching out across the Army and to others outside of our profession to discuss how we might address the challenges of the 21st-century security environment. We are characterizing this effort within TRADOC as a campaign of learning, and as part of this effort, I think it's important to describe some of the initiatives under way to support this campaign. This article is by no means a complete catalogue of the many adaptations we are undergoing within TRADOC. We hope to set the conditions for a continuum of learning across our Army that will result in a paradigm shift in our approach to institutional adaptation.

The competitive security environment demands that we



**GEN Martin E. Dempsey** is commanding general of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. Before that, he served as the deputy commander, and then acting commander, of U.S. Central Command. During the previous two years he commanded Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq. GEN Dempsey also commanded the 1st Armored Division,

which deployed to Iraq. After completing 14 months in Iraq, he redeployed the division to Germany to complete his command tour. Upon graduation from the U.S. Military Academy, he was commissioned as an armor officer. He holds master's degrees from Duke University, the Command and General Staff College, and the National War College.



prevail in the competitive learning environment. We've suggested that combat power in the 21st century will be less about throw weight and numbers of combat systems—though they will be important—and more about our ability to adapt. We've said that we must think about the future differently and transform systems, processes and concepts more frequently. All of this is achievable if—and only if—we make a campaign of learning our centerpiece for institutional adaptation. It must be more than a bumper sticker.

Within TRADOC, the campaign of learning is a set of initiatives built on the expectation of persistent conflict, grounded in the lessons learned from nine years of war and balanced against the emerging trends of the future operational environment. The campaign expects change, whether changes in training resulting from the proliferation of increasingly high-tech military capabilities falling into the hands of decentralized nonstate actors, or changes in basic combat training (BCT) resulting from the different skills and attributes of young men and women entering our Army today. The campaign of learning includes adapting to our doctrine, to our training, to how we develop our leaders and to how we build versatility for full spectrum capability in our organizational structures and equipment. Importantly, the campaign of learning isn't simply reaction to change—it drives change.

### Conceptual Framework

Over the past 18 months, we've been building a conceptual foundation to ensure that we clearly define what our Army must be able to do for the nation. We must be an Army capable of full spectrum operations in any environment. The Army's conceptual framework provides the intellectual underpinnings necessary to make institutional



and operational full spectrum operations for our Army and to integrate our efforts among doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel and facilities domains and warfighting functions.

One important change we've made to our conceptual framework is that we have stopped defining ourselves in terms of what the enemy might do to us—"irregular" or "regular" threats. We assert that the competitiveness of the operating environment has made that distinction almost meaningless. The conceptual framework also allows us to re-examine our "fundamentals" in training, education and leader development in order to provide a force that can achieve a standard of operational adaptability for the nation.

The *Army Capstone Concept* (TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-0) is the foundational document of the concept framework. It describes the future and sets the conditions for the Army's campaign of learning. The *Army Capstone Concept* and the war-fighting challenges it describes directly inform *The United States Army Operating Concept for Operational Maneuver 2015–2024* (TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1). The operating concept describes the employment of Army forces. It guides Army force development and identifies discrete capabilities required for success in current and future operational environments. The operating concept further refines the idea of full spectrum operations laid out in the Army Capstone Concept and Field Manual (FM) 3-0 *Operations*. It asserts that the Army must provide the nation with land forces capable in two distinct roles—wide area security and combined arms maneuver.

From the Army Operating Concept, we are deriving six warfighting functional concepts. These concepts will identify specific capability shortfalls, interdependencies and redundancies among warfighting functions. We will then be able to integrate organizational design, modernization programs, doctrinal changes, and improvements to training, education and leader development.

Critical to the campaign of learning, TRADOC recently introduced the Army's training and learning concepts. Both of these documents champion a rigorous and relevant learning environment that allows our 21st-century Army to train and learn better under variable conditions.

The Army Training Concept defines training requirements and capabilities required to generate and sustain units capable of full spectrum operations in the 2012–2020 time frame. The concept of our concurrent integrated training environment is designed to make our training more rigorous and relevant in the schoolhouse, at home station and at the combat training centers. In support of our integrated training environment initiative, we are establishing an enterprise among

the Joint Training Counter-IED Operations Integration Center, Combined Arms Center-Training's National Simulation Center and the battle command training program to generate live, virtual, constructive, and gaming capabilities to deliver the specific and relevant outcomes we expect.

The Army Learning Concept addresses the learning environment we envision in 2015. Its objective is to improve our learning models by employing technology without sacrificing standards. It calls for implementing advanced teaching techniques requiring self-discovery and teamwork. Acknowledging the changing nature of today's recruits, the learning concept calls for making the Army's educational experiences relevant to the future. It describes a continuum of learning that extends from the time soldiers are accessed until the time they separate. Continuous lifelong learning will



*SSG Kyle Drube, 95th Reserve Division, reminds a soldier to keep the safety on while inspecting arms during the 2010 Drill Sergeant of the Year competition at Fort Eustis, Va., in June.*

require a blend of schoolhouse-delivered instruction with instruction delivered at the point of need. Clearly, learning is a shared responsibility between the individual and the operating and generating forces. Technology, properly utilized, will allow us to share the responsibility for learning over the course of a career.

## Doctrine

Our conceptual foundations are already being integrated into our doctrine. The latest edition of FM 3-0 *Operations* introduced full spectrum operations. In FM 3-0, we emphasize the need to be able to simultaneously conduct offense, defense and stability operations, and to be able to react to all forms of contact. We will soon publish another update that will redefine our command-and-control warfighting function to take advantage more fully of the potential for decentralized operations and reintroduce it to the force as mission command.





SPC Qadree Smith, 217th Military Police Detachment, answers questions about improvised explosive devices during the 2010 U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) NCO and Soldier of the Year competition at Fort Eustis in July.

### Mission Command

Our doctrine currently speaks of *command and control* and *battle command*. These terms will be subsumed by the single term *mission command*. *Mission command* implies decentralization of capability and authority. It denotes that success is the result of understanding the context of operations and recognizing that information coming from the lowest tactical echelon is as important as that which comes from the highest strategic echelon. We describe the central idea behind mission command this way—in today’s operational environment, leaders at every echelon are cocreators of context.

The mission command warfighting function is supported by the introduction of design into leader development as an important companion piece to our traditional military decision-making process (MDMP). The MDMP is still critical for staff integration and orders production. After almost a decade of war, however, we have found this single process inadequate to account for the complexity of the operational environment. With the release of FM 5-0 *The Operations Process*, we have charted a major shift in how to develop adaptive leaders through the introduction of design. Design is a leader-centric cognitive tool that devel-

This year’s Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC) class of 482 students stand at parade rest during the graduation ceremony in July.



ops leaders who understand problems before seeking to solve them. As we know, commanders “understand, visualize, decide, direct and assess.” The traditional MDMP provides the commander with the tools to decide, direct and assess. With the introduction of design, leaders will also have the tools to understand and visualize.

Our new FM 7-0 *Training for Full Spectrum Operations* defines our full spectrum mission essential task list. This establishes a baseline for proficiency. FM 7-0 asserts that “good leaders understand that they cannot train on everything. Therefore, they focus on training the most important tasks. Leaders do not accept substandard performance in order to complete all the tasks on the training schedule. Training a few tasks to standard is preferable to training more tasks below the standard.” Quality must override quantity.

### Leader Development and the Army Profession

In order to fulfill the commitments we make to the nation in the Army concepts, we must develop our leaders. This summer I read a *New York Times* editorial by David Brooks titled “Drilling for Certainty” that described the events leading to the well explosion in the Gulf. He claims that a combination of failures led to the incident. On one level, it was a failure of processes and a failure of systems. He also implies, however, that on another level it was a failure of leader development. As he reports, corporate executives failed to recognize the conditions of increasing complexity in which their subordinates were operating. The act of drilling at 5,000 feet is exponentially more diffi-

GEN Martin E. Dempsey (left) talks with soldiers in the BOLC Phase II in April at Fort Sill, Okla. TRADOC has replaced BOLC II and III with BOLC B, which begins in February and March.



cult than drilling at 1,000 feet. Yet as complexity was building, risk was pushed to the platform.

There is a lesson here for us. We have said that the operating environment in which we ask our leaders to perform is complex, but some of our assumptions about how risk is managed are linear. We have learned and continue to learn that risk and complexity are exponentially growing over time. This notion must inform our leader development strategies.

After almost a decade of war and in an era of persistent conflict, we also think it is important for us to reexamine what it means to be a profession. The Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, in collaboration with the Center for Army Leadership, will drive this discussion across the Army. Ultimately, we will want this effort to inform a new Chapter 1 of FM 1-0.

### Initial Military Training

I cannot overstate the importance of our officer and enlisted initial entry training programs. Victory really does start here!

We have made more adaptations in initial military training (IMT) than anywhere else in TRADOC. Every soldier's and leader's personal campaign of learning begins in IMT. The rigor and relevance of both basic combat training and the Basic Officer Leadership Course are much improved. The recent adaptation to the BCT program of instruction is the full embodiment of what we seek to achieve with the campaign of learning. Standards for task achievement in every area are rising, and core tasks such as basic rifle marksmanship, combatives, first aid and other soldier skills now receive more time and are taught using advanced techniques.

All of these initiatives began with the revision of warrior tasks and battle drills. The changes in this area focus on the fundamental combat skills required by all soldiers regardless of rank, component, branch, or MOS and serve as the cornerstone for all training, education and leader development.

We have also improved physical readiness training and

education for all soldiers, replacing FM 21-20 *Army Physical Fitness Training* with Training Circular 3.22-20 *Army Physical Readiness Training*. We're focused on the "soldier as an athlete" initiative and as such have begun a complementary "fuel the soldier" initiative to instill good nutritional habits in our young soldiers during basic training.

Combatives are also much tougher and more relevant. Values are formally introduced and reinforced, as is training on culture. The foundations of resilience are provided. Across the board, training is both tougher and more sensible. Our goal is to provide soldiers and leaders to the operational force who are grounded in our values, who have the foundational skills of our profession, and who have a basic understanding of fitness, nutrition and resilience.

These latest adaptations to initial military training emphasize the shared responsibility between the operating and generating forces in training soldiers and leaders as well as building capable units and formations.

We will never be able to predict with any certainty the next unimaginable event that will occur in the 21st-century security environment. Thus we must build a resilient and adaptive Army that is better prepared to anticipate and overcome the unimaginable. In the coming year, we will continue to build upon this campaign by completing work on our conceptual foundation, implementing the Army leader development strategy, continuing to revise doctrine, and remaining alert for ways to improve training and learning both in the institutional schoolhouse and across the Army. Most important, our discourse on the profession will allow us to weave together our programs and converge on our fundamentals, to reexamine and recommit to the professional military ethic, to review how we are doing in developing leaders, and to enter into discourse about our roles and responsibilities. Being mindful of the challenges presented by the 21st-century security environment, we will make institutional adaptation a part of our fabric and begin to set a foundation for a campaign of learning that is enduring.

TRADOC is in the fight. Victory starts here!





# A Campaign of Learning To Achieve Institutional Adaptation

By GEN Martin E. Dempsey

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*We must think differently about how we develop leaders and how we organize, train, and equip our soldiers and units.*

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**A**bout 18 months ago, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command launched a campaign of learning for our Army to consider how we learn and adapt to meet the challenges of the 21st-century security environment. That's not to say that prior to 18 months ago our Army wasn't learning—far from it. In fact, during the last nine years of conflict, our Army has shown itself to be both introspective about its performance and adaptive to the lessons it has learned. Nevertheless, we wanted to formalize the effort to learn, and we wanted to make this campaign of learning the foundation of institutional adaptation.

Some have asked why we have placed increased emphasis on adaptation. Several significant trends have emerged over the past decade: hybrid threats of regular, irregular, terrorist and criminal groups with capabilities that rival those of nation states; an exponential pace of technological change; and greater complexity. These trends have created an operational environment that is very dangerous, increasingly competitive and always unpredictable. In response, our profession must embrace a culture of change and adaptation. We must think differently about how we develop leaders and how we organize, train, and equip our soldiers and units.

I'm interested in having a conversation across our Army about the future and about adaptation. I'm neither looking for consensus nor for affirmation of our current path. In fact, the power of our great profession comes from the diversity of thought possible because each of us has unique

experiences, training and education. I aspire to sharpen the dialogue about our emerging concepts, doctrine, training, leader development and how we can make adaptation an institutional imperative.

Over the next few months, a series of articles in ARMY Magazine will highlight initiatives that support our campaign of learning. These articles will ideally generate an Army-wide dialogue about our emerging concepts in order to establish a broader understanding of Army adaptation as an institutional imperative in an era of persistent conflict. These initiatives are all components of our overarching effort to adapt our institution based upon the hard-won lessons of the past nine years of war and the trends we can see before us in the 21st-century security environment. These articles are one of many ways we are reaching out to have a professional dialogue on the future of our great Army—just the beginning of what I expect to be a tremendously rewarding campaign of learning to shape the future of our Army together.

Each article will address a different challenge we face, articulating what we are changing and why we believe the change is necessary. Although these topics may adapt and evolve over the coming months, here is a general outline of the topics on which we want to shed light in order to advance our thinking on institutional adaptation.

**Driving Change Through Concepts.** This article will explain how our Army's conceptual work informs our doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities adaptations. It will articulate some of the important changes we've made in our recent revisions to both *The Army Capstone Concept* and *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, and it will explain how we plan to revise FM 3-0 *Operations*. It will discuss the need to clarify our understanding of full spectrum operations in the context of our Army's two broad responsibilities: combined arms maneuver and wide area security. The article will ex-





plain why we need to move away from “false choices” that measure the development of Army organizations and capabilities against what an adversary may try to do to us (counterinsurgency versus major combat operations).

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*There are no crystal balls that can predict the demands of future armed conflict. That is why I believe our ability to learn and adapt rapidly is an institutional imperative.*

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**Leader Development.** Our Army leader development strategy articulates the need to produce agile and adaptive leaders. This article will provide the opportunity for a discussion about what we mean when we use those terms, and it will propose that *inquisitive* should be added to the list of key leader attributes in the future. It will argue that we need to revise our existing learning models to provide relevant and realistic training and education for our soldiers and leaders. It will suggest that the development of a “central training brain” for our Army—capable of creating complex and dynamic environments for training, whether in the institutional schoolhouse, at home station, at a combat training center or while deployed—will transform how we train units and develop leaders. This article will also discuss the challenge of reintroducing young leaders to the idea of garrison leadership after nine years of continuous conflict.

**Mission Command.** In the upcoming revision to FM 3-0, mission command replaces command and control as a warfighting function. In anticipation of that change, we are currently in the process of standing up the Mission Command Center of Excellence (MCCoE) at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., under the leadership of the Combined Arms Center commander. This article will make the case for mission

command as a more precise description of the capabilities—art and science—required in today’s operational environment. It will describe why the old taxonomy is inadequate and has become overburdened. It will argue that the stand-up of the MCCoE is an opportunity for our Army to integrate the often disparate and stovepiped initiatives that affect this most critical warfighting function.

**How to Fight at Echelon.** This article will seek to answer the question: “How will echelons of our force fight differently in the context of wide area security and combined arms maneuver?” The intent is to describe the capabilities and competencies required at each echelon within our refined description of full spectrum operations.

**Series Summary.** This final article will summarize the topics discussed and the feedback received during this process. It will outline the way ahead as we continue our campaign of learning and also show how we will incorporate thoughts and ideas from across the force as we seek to make institutional adaptation more than just a “bumper sticker” for our Army.

There are no crystal balls that can predict the demands of future armed conflict. That is why I believe our ability to learn and adapt rapidly is an institutional imperative. Our emerging concepts reflect this mind-set, and I look forward to hearing your feedback on our efforts to date. I also look forward to continuing and expanding this professional dialogue as we prepare the Army to meet the demands of the 21st-century security environment. Victory starts here! ★

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# Concepts Matter

By GEN Martin E. Dempsey

*This is the second in a series of articles on the Army's "campaign of learning."*

**A**mong my favorite encounters with different groups within the Army are those with groups of cadets. It doesn't matter whether they're West Point cadets, ROTC cadets or warrant officer cadets. These young leaders-in-waiting want to know exactly what "we" intend to do with this Army, and they want to make sure I know that they intend to be part of achieving that vision. They are quite remarkable and always inspiring.

Within the past two years, we've made several important statements about "who we are" and "what we need to be" as an Army. In *The Army Capstone Concept* (ACC), we reviewed the lessons of nine years of warfare and, importantly, reflected equally on that which changes and that which endures. Most recently, in our *Army Operating Concept*, we articulated what we're going to do about making what we've learned institutional and made a commitment not to neglect, "wish away" or overlook that which endures.

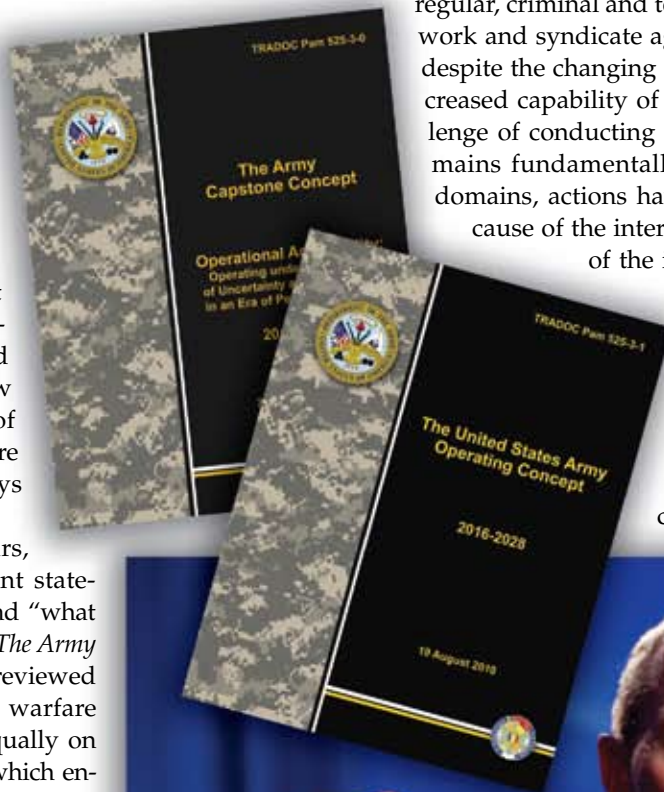
These concepts matter. They provide the intellectual foundation for how we design our Army and produce the doctrine, organizations, training, materiel, leaders, personnel and facilities to support it.

## *The Army Capstone Concept*

In *The Army Capstone Concept*, we noted the increase in the complexity of the environment, the dizzying pace of technological change and the emergence of hybrid threats—regular, ir-

regular, criminal and terrorist—who decentralize, network and syndicate against us. We also asserted that despite the changing character of conflict and the increased capability of potential adversaries, the challenge of conducting military operations on land remains fundamentally unchanged. Unlike in other domains, actions have meaning on the ground because of the interaction of people and as a result

of the interdependence of societal factors including religion, race, ethnicity, tribe, economy, judicial system and political system. As a result, military operations on land are manpower-intensive, subject to frequent and often unpredictable change, unforgivingly brutal,



GEN Martin E. Dempsey, commanding general of Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), discusses *The Army Capstone Concept* and an enterprise approach to support training of a 21st-century Army during the 2010 Winter Symposium of the Association of the U.S. Army in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

U.S. Army/SGT Angelica Golindano

LTC Mark Elfendahl, chief of the Joint and Army Concepts Division at TRADOC's Army Capabilities Integration Center, briefs members of U.S. Army Forces Command on The Army Operating Concept in September.



U.S. Army/Larry Stevens

and intensely demanding of leaders.

*The Army Capstone Concept* makes two important observations about military operations on land.

- Military operations on land require us to *develop the situation through action*. We aspire to “know” more than our adversaries, to “understand” as much as we can before making contact and to be “precise” in all our actions. Changing behavior on the ground, however, requires interaction on the ground and among the myriad stakeholders who will determine the outcome of our actions. That is, we must develop the situation through action—lethal and nonlethal, hard and soft, military and non-military.

- Military operations on land require us to make grounded projections of the future. We aspire to maintain a technological advantage over our adversaries. In doing so, however, we must remain grounded in the threats we see, the missions we are executing and the Army we have. Though “leaps ahead” have generally been considered good, they risk a loss of relevancy and credibility. The current and future operational environments require us to change incrementally and more frequently. Stated more precisely, our emphasis is on a continuous process of incremental improvements and adaptations—the expectation and anticipation of change rather than reactionary change. Adaptation must be an institutional imperative.

### *The Army Operating Concept*

*The Army Operating Concept* draws on the assertions and observations in the ACC and articulates how our Army will operate in the environment we’ve described. It builds on our commitment to “full spectrum operations” in FM 3-0 *Operations*. It declares that in order to be truly capable of full spectrum operations, our Army must be able to fulfill two broad responsibilities for the joint force commander.

- Army forces must be capable of conducting *combined arms maneuver* to seize and maintain the initiative over extended time and distance.

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- Army forces must be capable of *establishing security over wide areas* to consolidate gains and to establish favorable conditions on the ground for reestablishment of security and stability.

These are not separate—nor even separable—activities. We can’t choose to execute one but not the other. We can only define ourselves as a force capable of full spectrum operations when we can execute both—and, often, simultaneously.

### **Defining Ourselves**

Recently, I heard a group of company and battalion commanders speaking about their upcoming “full spectrum combat training center exercise.” When questioned about what they meant by a full spectrum exercise, they replied that they were “getting back to training for major combat operations.” That tendency to see ourselves either as preparing for irregular threats or for major combat operations poses a problem for us.

Humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism and major combat operations are all part of the spectrum of conflict and, therefore, equal claimants to a position along the full spectrum of operations. So, too, is military support to civil authority. By choosing one or more of them to define ourselves, we obscure that which we know we must be able to accomplish: maneuver and security against whatever threat presents itself.

A proper full spectrum training exercise will present both the mission to maneuver and the mission to establish security against hybrid threats with the expectation of making transitions between missions during the scenario.

To reinforce wide area security and combined arms maneuver, *The Army Operating Concept* also introduces mission command as a warfighting function, discusses the implications of decentralization and decentralized operations on organizational design and leader development, and describes the relationship among echelons as the cocreation of context to emphasize the importance of collaboration and trust in the new operational environment. ★



# MISSION COMMAND

By GEN Martin E. Dempsey

*This is the third in a series of articles on the Army's "campaign of learning."*

**I**n my article last month, I discussed some of the adaptations we're making to our concepts and doctrine within U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, adaptations informed by a serious study of the hard-earned lessons of nine years of war and the emerging trends we see in the 21st-century security environment. These adaptations are the centerpiece of our campaign of learning and establish the conceptual foundation that will guide the development of our Army to confront the difficult and uncertain security challenges that lie ahead.

We sometimes talk today about institutional adaptation as if it's a new idea, but a study of our history reveals that we've always been introspective about the need to change. Our Army has been here before. The early 1970s provide a strikingly similar example of where we are today, managing one set of known security challenges while preparing to address unknown challenges in an uncertain security environment.

At the conclusion of the Vietnam War, GEN William DePuy—along with Generals Donn Starry, Paul Gorman and others—launched what some have described as a doctrinal revolution. After a decade of engagement in low-intensity conflict, they focused the Army on winning the first battle of the next war and asserted, in Field Manual (FM) 100-5 *Operations*, that we needed to develop the capability to centralize, mass and synchronize forces quickly: "The first battle of our next war could well be its last battle. Belligerents could be quickly exhausted, and international pressures to stop fighting could bring about an early cessation

of hostilities. The United States could find itself in a short, intense war, the outcome of which may be dictated by the results of initial combat."

Their assessments were based on an analysis of the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 and on the threat of an expansionist Soviet Union. The doctrinal adaptations they made in the 1976 and 1982 versions of FM 100-5 changed the way the Army prepared for war. Indeed, this doctrinal focus on a predominantly centralized fight massing combat power at the decisive point drove the Army's training during most of the Cold War years.

Our current study of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq offers us lessons as well. In order to combat a decentralized enemy, we've learned—relearned—that we have to decentralize capabilities and distribute operations. We've been reminded that wars are a fundamentally human endeavor and always require interaction with a broad range of actors and potential partners. We've discovered—rediscovered—that technology provides important enablers but can never entirely lift the fog and friction inherent in war. We've seen hybrid threats emerge as the new norm in the operational environment and necessitate preparation across the full spectrum of conflict.

As described in previous articles, this demand for preparation across the full spectrum of conflict is reflected in *The Army Operating Concept* as a demand to achieve proficiency in both combined arms maneuver and wide area security. That is, we must be able to maneuver to gain the initiative and provide security to consolidate gains. Often we will be



*After the Vietnam War ended, GEN William E. DePuy, GEN Donn A. Starry and then-MG Paul F. Gorman (left to right) led a "doctrinal revolution" that shifted the Army's training to develop the capability to centralize, mass and synchronize forces quickly.*

LTG Robert Caslen, commanding general, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, addresses the need for mission command and the future of the Mission Command Center of Excellence at the AUSA 2010 Annual Meeting and Exposition.

required to execute both broad responsibilities simultaneously.

Confronting hybrid threats—combinations of regular, irregular, terrorist and criminal groups—in such an environment requires leaders who not only accept but seek and embrace adaptability as an imperative. In this environment, we believe mission command is a better reflection of how we must approach the art and science of command on the 21st-century battlefield.

As we've defined it in the latest update of FM 3-0 *Operations*, "mission command" is the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to ensure disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to accomplish full spectrum operations. Mission command employs the art of command and the science of control to enable commanders, supported by staffs, to integrate all the warfighting functions and enable agile and adaptive commanders, leaders and organizations. Importantly, mission command supports our drive toward operational adaptability by requiring a thorough understanding of the operational environment, by seeking adaptive teams capable of anticipating and managing transitions and by acknowledging that we must share risk across echelons to create opportunities. We've learned that mission command is essential for our success. Thus the upcoming revision to FM 3-0 establishes mission command as a warfighting function replacing command and control.

This change to mission command is not merely a matter of rhetoric. It represents a philosophical shift to emphasize the centrality of the commander, not the systems that he or she employs. It seeks a balance of command and control in the conduct of full spectrum operations; it asserts that command is likely to include not only U.S. military forces but also, increasingly, a diverse group of international, nongovernmental and host-nation partners.

Mission command emphasizes the importance of context and of managing the transitions between combined arms maneuver and wide area security among offense, defense and stability operations, and between centralized

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and decentralized operations through disciplined initiative within the commander's intent. Mission command illuminates the leader's responsibility to understand, visualize, decide, direct, lead and assess.

Previously, the term *battle command* recognized the need to apply leadership to "translate decisions into actions—by synchronizing forces and warfighting functions in time, space and purpose—to accomplish missions." What the terms *battle command* and *command and control* did not adequately address was the increasing need for the commander to frequently frame and reframe an environment of ill-structured problems to gain the context of operations by continuously challenging assumptions both before and during execution. In addition, these terms inadequately addressed the role of the commander in building teams with joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational partners. Mission command emphasizes the critical role of leaders at every echelon in contributing to a common operating assessment of context—we "cocreate context"—and it asserts that as we pass resources and responsibility "to the edge," we must also recognize the requirement to aggregate information and intelligence "from the edge." Mission command establishes a mind-set among leaders that the best understanding comes from the bottom up, not from the top down.

Doctrine and training will prepare us for what lies ahead only if, as GEN Gorman put it, "forceful, effective ideas on how to fight pervade the force." We know how to fight today, and we are living the principles of mission command in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet these principles have not yet been made institutional in our doctrine and in our training. They do not pervade the force. Until they do—until they drive our leader development, our organizational design and our materiel acquisitions—we cannot consider ourselves ready, and we should not consider ourselves sufficiently adaptable.





# Leader Development

By GEN Martin E. Dempsey

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*"We are often better served by connecting ideas than we are by protecting them."*

—Steven Johnson, *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation*

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Connecting ideas is important; connecting the right ideas is even more important. In previous articles in this series, I've expressed some ideas that I believe will set the Army on the proper course to confront the challenges that lie ahead for our Army and our nation. I've discussed why our conceptual foundation grounded in *The Army Capstone Concept* and *The Army Operating Concept* should serve as the basis

for why and how we must adapt in the future. I've discussed the changing roles and responsibilities of our leaders as we increasingly decentralize capabilities and distribute operations. I've discussed why we're adopting mission command as a warfighting function. With our shift to mission command, we must take a careful look at how we adapt our leader-development programs and policies to develop leaders who can effectively operate in a much more transparent, complex and decentralized



U.S. Army/Sgt Ben Brody

operational environment. Aligning and connecting our leader-development programs and policies with our conceptual foundation and doctrinal changes such as mission command become the most critical adaptations we can make within our campaign of learning.

I want to reassure you that we have always developed and will continue to develop leaders based on the fundamentals of “move, shoot and communicate.” Moreover, we will continue to measure the effectiveness of our leader-development programs against clearly defined tasks, conditions and standards. What I’m suggesting here, however, is that our leader-development programs must also produce and reward leaders who are inquisitive, creative and adaptable.

It should be clear to all after more than nine years of conflict that the development of adaptive leaders who are comfortable operating in ambiguity and complexity will increas-

this regard. What I also promise, however—and this, too, is confirmed by our history—is that it is *always* the leaders on point who are able to take what we give them, adapt to the environment in which they are placed and accomplish the mission. Leader development becomes job number one. Thus we’ve undertaken a series of substantive adaptations to rebalance the three pillars of leader development—training, education and experiences—and have also proposed several personnel policy changes to make it clear that we are elevating the importance of our leader-development programs.

There are two documents that will guide our efforts to adapt our leader-development programs and policies. They are the Army “Leader Development Strategy for a 21st Century Army” (ALDS) released in November 2009 and “The Profession of Arms,” a white paper released in December 2010. The ALDS reflects what we’ve learned after more

than nine years of war and presents nine leader-development imperatives that will drive how we adapt our training, education and experiences across the Army. In particular, the ninth imperative of the ALDS highlights the need to renew our understanding of what it means to be a professional within the profession of arms in an era of persistent conflict. This imperative forms the basis for “The Profession of Arms” white paper that will serve as the catalyst for a period of introspection and dialogue in 2011.

Throughout this year, we will discuss which attributes are essential for

Army professionals and for our profession. This focus on the profession will be inextricably linked with our efforts to evolve our leader-development policies and programs in accordance with the ALDS imperatives.

### Training

One of the imperatives that we highlight in the ALDS is to “prepare our leaders by replicating the complexity of the operational environment in the classroom and at home station.” We cannot expect to capture the imagination of combat-seasoned forces that have been in some of the most complex environments imaginable for almost a decade by sitting them in a classroom and bludgeoning them with PowerPoint slides. We must make the “scrimmage” as hard as the “game” in both the institutional schoolhouse and at home station.

One of the important initiatives under way to ensure that we make the scrimmage hard enough for our leaders-in-training is the Army Training Concept (ATC). The ATC is designed to make training more rigorous and relevant by leveraging technology to create challenging training environments for our leaders. A core enabler of the ATC is Training and Doctrine Command’s “Training Brain,” which is a data repository operating out of the Joint Training Counter-IED [Improvised Explosive Device] Operations

*The dynamic nature of the 21st-century security environment requires adaptations across the force. The most important adaptations will be in how we develop the next generation of leaders, who must be prepared to learn and change faster than their future adversaries. Simply put, developing these adaptive leaders is the number-one imperative for the continued health of our profession.*

ingly be our competitive advantage against future threats to our nation. I’m personally convinced of this because it’s clear we will never predict with any accuracy what the future holds. To reinforce this point, I often make a series of promises to students in precommand courses as they prepare to lead our great young men and women as battalion and brigade commanders and command sergeants major. I promise them that the future security environment will never play out exactly the way we’ve envisioned. History confirms this. I promise that we will not provide the optimal organizational design nor perfectly design the equipment that they will need when they enter into a future mission. History—especially recent events—confirms this as well, although we do our best not to get it too wrong. And I promise that the guidance they receive from “higher headquarters” will always come a little later than needed. We would be ill-advised to think that we will do much better than our predecessors in

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Integration Center near Fort Monroe, Va. The Training Brain allows us to pull streams of real-world data from current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, declassify it and use it to build realistic scenarios to support training throughout the Army. We are also using the Training Brain to create videos of real-world scenarios in a virtual format based upon recent battles and operations and make them accessible on the Army Training Network. Soldiers can use this as a tool to facilitate their own learning, whether they're in a schoolhouse environment, conducting home-station training or even deployed.

In addition, the Training Brain is helping us to evolve massive multiplayer online role-playing games that will allow soldiers and leaders to interact and collaborate using common scenarios in a virtual environment with other soldiers within their units and across the Army. This enables us to provide realistic and relevant training and learning opportunities at the point of need. Moreover, this exploits the growing expectation for collaboration among leaders and orients our training more toward a student-centric model instead of an instructor-centric model. This capability exists today, and it's already taking off across the Army.

I recently received an e-mail forwarded to me from one of our schoolhouses in TRADOC. The message described a class of captains in their career course and how they were voluntarily organizing into teams to compete against one another in an online role-playing game based on a relevant scenario for training. These officers were giving up their lunch hour, and even coming in early and staying late, to continue their training and learning experience on their own time. This Army training captures the imagination, challenges the participants and allows them to adapt the material to facilitate their learning needs—a far cry from the death-by-PowerPoint approach with which many of us are all too familiar. As I often say, “It’s good to be for what’s going to happen,” and I’m not surprised in the least that our junior leaders are seizing emerging technologies to address their own learning needs.

## Education

A commitment to continuing education has always been a hallmark of the Army profession. We invest tremendous resources to develop the best educational opportunities for our soldiers. There are two areas in particular, however, that require immediate attention. One is the need to move away from a platform-centric learning model to one that is centered more on learning through facilitation and collaboration. The “sage on the stage” will give way to the “guide on the side” who will facilitate learning and focus on problem solving in the classroom.

The other is the development and introduction of a structured self-development program for officers using the successful NCO self-development program as a model for what right looks like.

It’s important to note, however, that these initiatives will work only if we consider our professional military education (PME) an investment in—and not a tax on—the profession.

Because of the demands of the last nine years of war, we haven’t been sending the message to our leaders that we value education as an essential element of leader development. The significant backlogs for the Noncommissioned Officer Education System and the rapid increase year after year of Senior Service College deferrals are just two examples of a growing problem that we must address immediately. We have to put “teeth” back into our personnel policies to ensure that we balance our support to the current fight with the imperative to invest in the development of our future leaders. Don’t get me wrong; I actually like the problem we have. We have an Army of combat-tested soldiers and leaders who are eager to broaden the aperture and build on their experiences. In other words, we have an Army that wants to develop. Our policies must encourage this development.

To ensure that the policies we put in place are reflective of our goals to support and encourage education and development, we have made some recent changes to existing policies. These policy changes will require some time to be made fully institutional across the force, but the enforcement of these policies will be essential

to effectively rebalance our commitment to the three pillars of leader development. I will discuss specific policy changes that affect our Officer Corps, but we are also addressing similar policy adaptations for our NCO Corps and warrant officers.

One of the policy adjustments is to mandate that officers complete intermediate-level education prior to competing for battalion command and for



*Leah McGlynn, director of the Training Brain at the Joint Training Counter-IED Operations Integration Center, briefs Secretary of the Army John McHugh during his visit with GEN Dempsey.*

U.S. Army / SGT Angelica Colindano



*GEN Dempsey addresses students—field-grade officers from all services, multinational officers and interagency civilians—at the Joint and Combined Warfighting School in Norfolk, Va., last July.*



U.S. Army/SGT Angelica Golindano

promotion to lieutenant colonel. We will also mandate completion of Senior Service College programs prior to assuming brigade command and reinforce the idea that joint service before brigade command is a desired goal. With the cooperation of leaders “in the fight,” we must ensure that our deployed captains and majors serving in combat are afforded the opportunity to rotate out to attend required PME according to their career time lines. Likewise, we will reinforce key and developmental assignment standards of 24 months for field-grade officers to ensure adequate time for PME and for broadening experiences. Lastly, we assess that it is time to revise the Officer Evaluation Record system and NCO Evaluation Record system to ensure that they adequately assess the attributes we seek in our future leaders according to the “Leader Development Strategy for a 21st Century Army.”

All of these policy changes will better enable us to more effectively manage our Army’s talent and provide leaders more opportunities to broaden themselves beyond their tactical experiences. Assignments and experiences that expose our leaders to different ways of thinking will broaden and better prepare them for continued service.

### Experience

In addition to providing opportunities for key and developmental assignments based on their branch of service, it is important that we afford our leaders the opportunity and time for broadening assignments and experiences. Service inside the institution allows leaders to understand how their Army functions. Service on the Joint Staff or on a combatant command staff allows Army leaders to gain firsthand experience

working with the other services. A tour working with one of our interagency partners—or participation in a fellowship with industry, a think tank or an academic institution—provides exposure to a different type of mind-set and way of doing business. In addition, for years now we’ve emphasized the importance of cultural awareness and empathy as an Army, and yet we’ve consistently provided fewer candidates for the Olmsted Scholar Program than the other services. All of these experiences enable our developing leaders to form and build a network of contacts through a variety of experiences that will serve them well in future assignments of increased responsibility and scope.

Of course, the experience pillar of leader development is the hardest to achieve as an Army at war. We will always meet the needs of deployed commanders to the very best of our ability. As tactical demands allow, however, and in cooperation with deployed commanders, we must also begin to deliberately broaden our leaders. We are in the process of reviewing and revising our definition of *broadening* to ensure that we are developing the kind of leaders we need for the future. Only when we adequately address all three pillars of leader development—training, education and experience—can we state that we have an effective and functioning leader-development program.

The dynamic nature of the 21st-century security environment requires adaptations across the force. The most important adaptations will be in how we develop the next generation of leaders, who must be prepared to learn and change faster than their future adversaries. Simply put, developing these adaptive leaders is the number-one imperative for the continued health of our profession. ★



By GEN Martin E. Dempsey

**Win, Learn, Focus, Adapt, Win Again**

In articles that have appeared in ARMY over the past several months, I've discussed Training and Doctrine Command's campaign of learning and our ongoing efforts to improve and adapt as an Army based on lessons learned both from history and our experiences over the last decade of war. I've described several important conceptual and doctrinal changes that we are making in the Army as a result of this effort. I've also asserted that these changes are an important first step to build the future force but are not yet institutionalized in our doctrine and in our training—they do not yet "pervade the force." So the hard work begins for us as an Army. We must determine how these ideas will drive our leader development, our organizational design, and our materiel acquisitions in the months and years ahead.

As I make my way around the Army and speak with our great young men and women in uniform, it's clear that they understand the challenges we face. They expect that we will commit the necessary attention and resources to ensure that we win the fights we're in. Ensuring that our soldiers receive the best training, education and equipment to prevail in today's conflicts will always be our priority. We also have an obligation to our soldiers and to the nation, however, to prepare our Army for uncertainty—the challenge around the corner that we will undoubtedly be called upon to face. This is why we must establish a conceptual foundation that is coherent and provides the build-

further elaborating on the central idea behind our newly published concepts.

The central idea within *The Army Operating Concept* is that success in the future security environment requires Army forces capable of defeating enemies and establishing conditions necessary to achieve national objectives using combined arms maneuver and wide-area security to seize, retain and exploit the initiative as part of full spectrum operations. These two activities are neither separate nor separable. We must be able to execute both—and often simultaneously—within the context of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational efforts. In addition,

to accomplish these two activities and provide forces capable of achieving speed of action, of identifying and exploiting opportunities, and of protecting against unanticipated dangers, we need forces capable of exercising mission command by decentralizing authority to act faster than the enemy. So let me share some considerations on how these foundational concepts and emerging doctrine must influence our thinking about how we will operate in the future.

First, our forces must be able to operate in a decentralized manner to conduct and sustain operations from and across extended distances. Con-



U.S. Army/SGT Cooper T. Cash

ing blocks to prepare our Army for what's next. As I've previously articulated when discussing *The Army Operating Concept*, we have an obligation to connect our concepts and doctrine in such a way that they provide the necessary framework to build the force we need for the future. That is why I've encouraged our Army to step away from defining ourselves against what an adversary might do to us—regular, irregular, insurgency, major combat—and focus instead on the two principal operational competencies we must provide for joint force commanders: wide-area security and combined arms maneuver. In so doing, we begin to build a coherent narrative about the capabilities necessary for us to confront the uncertain challenges that lie ahead.

Throughout this series of articles, we've reflected on what we've learned and how we must adapt as an institution. In this final article summarizing our campaign of learning, I'd like to offer some considerations as we continue our efforts to cultivate a culture of learning throughout our Army. Before I do that, let me set the context by

sistent with the tenets of mission command, commanders consider the experience and competence of subordinate leaders and units, and their ability to integrate additional forces, enablers and partner capabilities. They then organize command structures and empower decisions as far down the chain of command as practical to conduct operations in a decentralized manner and ensure the greatest possible freedom of action. Consistent with mission command, commanders apply design as part of the operations process to understand complex, ill-structured problems and develop a clear concept of the operation. This concept allocates resources and guides the actions of subordinates to enable them to accomplish the mission within the commander's intent.

Second, commanders seek to "empower the edge" by pushing capabilities to the lowest level appropriate for a particular mission. Commanders at lower echelons require access to a wide array of capabilities (Army, joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational) to confront and solve complex problems. Army forces communicate with and integrate interagency, intergovernmental and multinational partner capabilities at the lowest practical echelon. In addition, Army leaders understand both the capabilities and limitations of partners in order to integrate them effectively in the planning and execution of operations. They must also be able to work collaboratively when necessary to leverage the capabilities of those actors who operate outside their direct authority and control.

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Third, commanders emphasize continuous reconnaissance to gather information on which they base plans, decisions and orders. Effective reconnaissance requires persistent vigilance, the ability to fight for information in close contact with populations and enemies, and available reserves to reinforce units once they gain contact with the enemy. In this regard, it is important to emphasize the distinction between the warfighting function of intelligence, the tactical task of surveillance, and the various forms of reconnaissance operations. Recognition of the differences among these terms—*intelligence*, *surveillance* and *reconnaissance*—stands in contrast to current practice, which collapses the terms into the acronym ISR, thereby diluting their unique meaning. We must also examine closely how well the Army is organized to conduct effective reconnaissance and security operations at the corps, division and brigade combat team levels and make the necessary adjustments to doctrine, organizational design training and leader development.

Fourth, the success of the future force requires effective integration of land, sea, air, space and cyber operations. We've come a long way and accomplished much in this regard over the past 10 years, but more remains to be done. Such integration is necessary to expand the operational reach of future forces and enable them to operate successfully over wide areas while securing extended lines of communication against hybrid threats. We should seek to establish and develop habitual relationships to gain a common understanding of our capabilities so that we can overwhelm the enemy with disciplined and discriminate force.

Fifth, prevailing in the 21st-century security environment with our joint partners requires Army forces to simultaneously *inform* allies, partners, and indigenous populations while *influencing* the attitudes and actions of adversaries. Army forces inform the American public and civilian leaders, allies, partners, and foreign publics to inform decision making, strengthen mutual trust, achieve unity of effort and establish favorable conditions to sustain support for operations. Army leaders and soldiers also inform indigenous populations to clarify the intent of Army operations,



ISAF/U.S. Air Force/SSgt. Joseph Swafford

***Success in future armed conflict requires the Army to sustain the expertise we've developed in wide-area security, rekindle our expertise in combined arms maneuver, and develop leaders who understand and embrace operational adaptability. We need to win, learn, focus, adapt and win again on a continuing cycle.***

combat disinformation, isolate adversaries from the population, and build relationships to gain trust and support. At the same time, Army forces influence adversaries and potential partners to bring about changes in behavior or attitude consistent with military and political objectives.

Sixth, commanders build cohesive units capable of withstanding the demands of combat. Leaders prepare their units to fight and adapt under conditions of uncertainty. In the conduct of operations, Army forces and leaders always exhibit moral behavior while making critical, time-sensitive decisions under pressure. At higher echelons, we seek to synchronize the training, readiness, and deployment cycles of corps, divisions, and lower-echelon units to build cohesive teams, mentor subordinate leaders and establish the level of trust necessary for successful decentralized execution. Commanders also adapt to changing conditions and "build in" flexibility that allows them to disaggregate and reaggregate capabilities as the situation dictates. This is particularly critical when

leaders are planning operations in a complex and fluid operating environment that requires units to seamlessly, and often rapidly, change from wide-area security to combined arms maneuver as the situation demands.

Finally, to enable all of these actions, we must conduct effective transitions. A senior leader once told me that it is the responsibility of general officers to manage transitions. Given the complex nature of the security environment and the fact that we've deliberately pushed responsibility and capability to the edge, managing transitions is now the responsibility of leaders at all levels. We must develop leaders who understand both the "art" and the "science" of managing transitions.

Our Army is capable of doing a lot of things, and we have to be prepared to do whatever the nation asks. Success in future armed conflict requires the Army to sustain the expertise we've developed in wide-area security, rekindle our expertise in combined arms maneuver, and develop leaders who understand and embrace operational adaptability. We need to win, learn, focus, adapt and win again on a continuing cycle. ★



# The Profession of Arms: Walking This Road Together

Remarks by GEN Martin E. Dempsey  
at the AUSA Winter Symposium and Exposition  
24 February 2011



## Introduction

Thank you for that very warm introduction. It's a pleasure to be back to my third AUSA winter symposium. Truth be told, South Florida is not a bad place to be in the dead of winter, so I didn't exactly come kicking and screaming.

I must say that as the Army's lead for the conference this year, I've really enjoyed working with so many superb professionals from AUSA. In fact, if the conference is any reflection of the partnership we've forged in our planning for this week, then I believe it will prove to be a tremendously rewarding event for everyone involved.

It's also great to see so many friends and colleagues that have joined us here today. I view these sessions as tremendous opportunities to connect, to build relationships, and to discuss our profession. We're here because we share an interest in keeping our Army strong.

Before we discuss that, I want to share a story about something that happened to me while on leave out in the country recently.

One morning while I was taking a walk along a country road, I came across a very large sheep farm. I guess I was feeling exhilarated by being that close to nature for a change, so I approached the sheep farmer who was tending to his herd. I told him, "Hey, if I can predict exactly how many sheep you have on your farm, can I pick one out and keep it?" I'm not sure what I intended to do with a sheep, and Deanie would have undoubtedly thought I hit my head on something if I brought one home, but I asked anyway. The sheep farmer, of

course, didn't expect that I would get anywhere close to predicting so he agreed—with much amusement—to my offer. I surveyed the acres of pasture and the herd of sheep, did a little plebe math, and said, "2,534." To the rancher's great surprise, I had hit it exactly right.

Glowing in my brilliance, I then selected a sheep, picked him up and began to walk away. The farmer stopped me in my tracks and said, "Hey, if I can guess your name and where you were born and raised, can I get my sheep back?" Of course, I said "sure," and he responded, "You're Marty Dempsey from Bayonne, New Jersey." I was more than a little shocked and frankly frightened by the fact that this sheep farmer knew this information about me, so I asked, "How could you possibly have known that?" The sheep herder replied, "Well, if you'll put down my dog I'll explain it to you."

Let me just say that I feel as humbled today to be speaking with you as I felt after that experience with the sheep farmer.

I take great pride in my association with AUSA. The Association serves as a powerful voice for those who sacrifice so much for the freedoms we all share. They are a champion for Army families who are keeping things together at home while their spouses are deployed in harm's way. They fight to ensure our Army remains the best fighting force on the planet.

General Sullivan, sir, thank you for everything you do for our Soldiers and our Army. On a personal level, thank you for being such a great friend and mentor to



me. Your engaging and thoughtful leadership has helped us build the most capable and combat-seasoned fighting force in our history. I look forward to working with you in the future to continue to build on the legacy you've already established as the Army's premiere champion. Thank you, sir, for being a great partner and for your tireless commitment and resolve to represent the treasure of our land—the American Soldier.

To begin where we should always begin, I'd like to start off by bragging a little bit about our great Soldiers and their accomplishments over the past decade. You see, our young Soldiers are truly remarkable and have accomplished some amazing things. There's a great Eminem song out right now—that's right, you just heard me reference Eminem. The song is called "Not Afraid," and what captured my interest is really two things. First, we as senior leaders of our Army have to make it a priority to find ways to reach our young people. If that means this 58-year-old senior leader takes an interest in Eminem music, so be it. Second, the refrain from the song says, "We'll walk this road together, you're not alone, Holla if you feel that you've been down the same road."

Now I hope you realize that will be the only time in your lives you will ever hear a four-star use the word "Holla!" But I like the refrain because we as an Army are walking this road together and we've certainly been down this road before. It makes me think of a book General Sullivan recently recommended to me called *Thinking in Time* by Richard Neustadt and Ernest May. The subtitle of the book is *The Uses of History for Decision-Makers*, and that pretty much tells you the general message of the book. Because we've been down this road before, it's important to have a firm grasp of our history to appreciate its patterns while simultaneously recognizing that every situation is unique.

So back to our greatest resource—our Soldiers. As a nation, we are thankful that such young men and women continue to serve. We owe them more than we can ever repay.

As you know, we—and I include you in that pronoun—are working tirelessly to provide the best organizations, the best training and the best equipment for them, but there are some signals that our challenges in caring for them will only increase. If you haven't read the book *War* by Sebastian Junger or seen the documentary "Restrepo" based on the book, you need to. There are some interview clips toward the end of the movie with some of our young Soldiers that vividly portray their emotions as they work to understand their combat experiences.

If you've been paying attention to some of the headlines over the past few years, you know we're seen as struggling to take care of our people. We've seen stories on the rising number of Soldiers losing their homes to foreclosures, the growing number of Soldiers addicted to painkillers and prescription medications, and the continuing struggle we're undergoing with suicide prevention. Clearly, we've got to pay attention to these signals.

Deanie gave me a terrific Valentine's Day card this year. It shows an older couple sitting together on a bench. The woman says something along the lines of, "Well, we're together for another year," and the man says, "Sure, I could go for a cold beer." I think Deanie gave it to me because she sometimes accuses me of being "wife deaf." She's probably right. I sometimes get too busy to pay attention to what's going on around the house. The message in these signals is we can't afford to get too busy that we fail to pay attention to what's going on around our Army.

One of our great poets, Maya Angelou, once said, "A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer; it sings because it has a song."

Ladies and gentlemen, we may not have all the answers, but we have an important story to tell about our Army. We are—as always—a force in transition. Our history tells us that we will expand and contract, train and deploy, and we will perpetually modify our Tables of Organization and Equipment. But as we do, our first imperative as leaders *must* be to care for the Soldiers and families that have endured and sacrificed so much for the country they love. That's our story, and we need your continued help in telling it.

As reflected in those few images, the effects of war will be felt by our Soldiers for a lifetime. We need to ensure their service and sacrifices are appreciated with the best care and support this nation can muster. And it's not just right now as they return from overseas. I'm talking about continuing to care for them, to honor their sacrifices and to meet their needs 10 years from now.

So the care of our Soldiers and their families is simply nonnegotiable.

The rest of our story is that we need to *win, learn, focus, adapt and win again*. We must WIN the conflicts in which we find ourselves, LEARN better—and faster—than our enemies, FOCUS on the fundamentals, ADAPT



as an institutional imperative and, when called upon, WIN AGAIN. Nothing less will do.

The theme of this year's conference is "The Army's Campaign of Learning: Creating a Competitive Advantage through Adaptive Leaders and Versatile Units." So let me connect the dots a bit here and talk about what our Army is doing to **learn, focus and adapt**.

### Learn

I'll start with "learn."

Simply stated, we're seeking to prevail in a highly competitive learning environment. Recently, our Commander-in-Chief noted that "whoever out-educates us today is going to out-compete us tomorrow." He was calling attention to challenges within our education system, but the same can be said about our competitive edge as an Army. We need to learn better and understand better than our adversaries and competitors.

This isn't just about technology, but technology provides us important opportunities. Even now, we are prototyping technologies that will allow us to deliver learning at the point of need—that is, learning when and where Soldiers and leaders need it. This is causing us to reconsider how we will accomplish professional military education.

We've asked the question, "What is doctrine in 2015 and how will it be developed and distributed?" It is not likely to be footlockers of paper manuals revised every five years. This same line of inquiry leads to an important operational question: "What is an Operations Center in 2015?" It is not likely to be a place.

We are working to blur and blend the learning experiences of deployments, education in the schoolhouse, training at home station and training at the combat training centers. Absent actual violence, each should confront Soldiers and leaders with the complexity, ambiguity and unpredictability of the operating environment

so that our training and education is equally relevant, credible and challenging. As the old saying goes, "The scrimmage needs to be as hard as the game."

We're seeking to make service in our Army a learning continuum which demands a greater collaboration between our operating and generating force. When a young man or woman raises their right hand, they enter this learning continuum and are challenged, mentored and tracked along its path throughout their career. We intend to place greater demands on the individual for his or her self-development and provide interesting, relevant and credible tools for them to manage it. We intend to redefine, recalibrate and recertify our instructors against a new learning model.

We know that the future security environment will require us to reemphasize and in some cases restore traditional knowledge, skills and attributes, but we assert that it will also require new attributes like inquisitiveness, creativity, the ability to communicate more effectively and the instinct to collaborate. Having identified the challenges of learning, we've got to overcome them. You've heard us say that people are our competitive edge. That's only true if we continue to invest in them and to challenge them.

You can help. We need the best minds to help us think about learning differently, to see the opportunities in new learning technologies and to help us develop an affordable learning strategy for our Army.

### Focus

Let me talk about "focus" for a moment.

The future is so complex and uncertain that we could convince ourselves that we must continue to add task to task, skill to skill and attribute to attribute in order to prepare our units and their leaders to address every possible challenge. That, however, would be the wrong answer.

The future we anticipate requires Soldiers and leaders who are confident in themselves and their teams, who are masters of the most critical tasks and who fully expect to have to adapt to the situations in which they are placed. In other words, despite pressure to do otherwise, we should NOT try to become "jacks of all trades" but rather know what we do better than anyone else and expect to have to adapt to other tasks as they present themselves.

We are about to publish [Field Manual] 7-0, our training doctrine. In it we assert that leaders must agree upon what's most important and what's feasible and then chart a course to master it. Because training is the foundation upon which confidence and trust are established and from which adaptations are made, **just good enough is never just good enough in training**.

Impending missions and the "patch chart" will determine how a unit's time, intellect and energy will be consumed. Add to that the enduring requirement to address leader development, training management and command supply discipline, and a unit's scarcest



resource—time—is already in short supply.

That's why we are advocating a reframing of our fundamentals and a commitment to focus our leaders on that which we need to master so that we can adapt from a position of strength and confidence.

You can help here too. As we determine how we will focus our efforts in training and education, we will require interesting, relevant and credible training scenarios, low-overhead drivers to replicate complexity, ambiguity and hybrid threats at home station and in the schoolhouse, and the ability to provide [combat training center]-quality feedback to units wherever they train.

We can figure this out. I envision home station exercises that are populated with data from a centrally managed database to create complex and unpredictable scenarios, three to four training developers armed with two laptops to take this data and drive exercise scenarios, intelligent holograms and avatars for key leader engagements and interrogation, an unmanned aerial system to record field exercise performance—both voice and video—a virtual, collaborative environment in which to conduct [after-action reviews] and capture lessons learned, and the ability in-house to build applications and modify simulations for use in post-exercise training. We have recently teamed with [the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] to create such a future training environment, and we are seeking other partners. **The last training revolution in our Army was built around the combat training centers; the next training revolution in our Army will be built around home station.**

### Adapt

That leads me to “adapt.”

To give ourselves some credit, we're already among the most adaptable organizations—public or private—in our country, but as Mario Andretti said, “If everything feels under control, you're just not going fast enough.”

I've been thinking a lot lately about 2020. There are two reasons for this sudden interest. First, 2020 is the near future, the future for which we will be held accountable. It's great sport to speculate about the middle of this century and opine about how global trends will affect our security, but try to get someone to discuss 2020 and the discussion becomes more muted. We've got to take mute off and up the volume on the near future. Second, in the next four years, through the next four [Program Objective Memorandum] submissions—[2013–17 through 2016–20]—we will create the Army we employ in 2020.

So, right now, we're building the Army of 2020, and here's what's even more interesting. We're doing so in the full knowledge that the Army of 2020 will not be the Army our nation needs in 2030. That's why adaptation is now an institutional imperative.

That means force mix, force design, the relationship of the active and reserve components, force management,

training and equipping strategies must be adaptable. It means that accessions, personnel and leader development policies must be adaptable. It means that requirements, acquisition and procurement processes must be adaptable. It means that experimentation, evaluation and testing must be adaptable.

I don't want to be vague about this, so let me put a little finer edge on what it will mean to be adaptable: faster, flatter, more collaborative and always resource-sensitive. It means revision of concepts every two years; significant organizational redesign every five years; incremental modernization with [five-to-seven]-year procurement objectives synchronized to [Army Force Generation]; revision of doctrine, training methodologies and leader development programs every [one to two] years.

I'm not suggesting that this will be easy. This call to be more adaptive must be harmonized with what I described earlier about focus—we must understand our core, remain true to it, but be prepared to adapt to the nation's needs as they are revealed.

And we obviously need your help here, too. I believe that if we clearly articulate what we need and when we need it, you'll support us. Remember: faster, flatter, more collaborative and always resource-sensitive.

### Profession

Finally, I'd like to spend a few minutes discussing our ongoing Profession of Arms campaign. At the beginning of this year, the Chief of Staff and the Secretary directed [Army Training and Doctrine Command] to oversee a campaign to study our profession. We are just beginning a dialogue inside and outside the Army to assess what the last decade of war has done to our understanding and commitment to the profession and its ethic. We need to “see ourselves” to ensure we preserve the extraordinary relationship we currently enjoy with the American people. We've accomplished so much in the past ten years, and yet it seems like we have so much more to accomplish. I think we all sometimes wonder if we can figure it all out.

But then I recall visiting a young company commander at a remote combat outpost guarding a Taliban infiltration route on the Afghanistan–Pakistan border just a few days after they had repulsed a major attack. I asked him how he thought we were doing in Afghanistan. He replied, “Well, sir, I can't speak for anyone else, but I can tell you that there won't be any Taliban infiltrating from Pakistan along this route!”

That's clarity. That's courage. That's resolve. We must not fail him, his Soldiers or their families.

At another challenging time in our history, Henry Ford said, “Whether you think you can or that you can't, you're usually right.”

I think we can.

God bless our Army and our great nation.

Victory Starts Here!!







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